



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Contact: John Asher
Vice President, Racing Communications
Churchill Downs Racetrack
Office: (502) 636-4586
Mobile: (502) 494-3626
John.Asher@KentuckyDerby.com

**BRADESTER LEADS EVERY STEP, HOLDS OFF EAGLE TO EARN MILLIONAIRE STATUS,
FIRST GRADE I TRIUMPH IN CHURCHILL DOWNS' \$500,000 STEPHEN FOSTER HANDICAP**

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Saturday, June 18, 2016) – Joseph Sutton's **Bradester** grabbed the lead at the start, opened a clear lead on the turn for home under jockey **Joe Bravo** and held off the late-charging **Eagle** by a half-length to score the biggest victory of his career in the 35th running of the \$500,000 Grade I Stephen Foster Handicap Presented by GE Appliances on Saturday night's "Downs After Dark" program at Churchill Downs that lured 19,034 fans.

Based at Churchill Downs for trainer **Eddie Kenneally**, the victory by the 6-year-old son of Lion Heart was his first in a Grade I stakes event and the first-place prize of \$303,000 pushed his career earnings past \$1 million. Bradester won for the second time in as many starts in 2016 and earned an automatic spot in the starting gate for the \$6 million Breeders' Cup Classic (GI) in November at Santa Anita with his win in the Stephen Foster, which is part of the Breeders' Cup "Win & You're In Classic Division" series.

Bradester won for the third time in eight career starts at Churchill Downs as racing's newest millionaire held Eagle safe and covered the Stephen Foster's 1 1/8-mile distance in 1:48.85 over a fast track. The winner paid \$20.40, 8:40 and \$5.40. Runner-up Eagle, ridden by **Brian Hernandez Jr.**, paid \$5.20 and \$3.40. **Majestic Harbor**, who finished a neck farther back in third under **Corey Lanerie**, returned \$3.60 to show.

Heavily favored **Effinex**, runner-up to Horse of the Year **American Pharoah** in last fall's \$5 million Breeders' Cup Classic (GI) and winner of November's Clark Handicap Presented by Norton Healthcare (GI) in his only other start at Churchill Downs, finished seventh in the field of eight 3-year-olds and up. The odds-on 3-5 betting choice finished nearly eight lengths behind the victorious Bradester under jockey **Gary Stevens**.

Kenneally gave Bradester a break after he ended his 2015 season with a ninth-place finish behind **Liam's Map** in the Breeders' Cup Dirt Mile (GI) at Keeneland. He returned with an easy win in the one-mile Majestic Light at Monmouth Park on May 21, and the decision to take a shot at the Stephen Foster was made shortly before the race.

"He was coming into the race great so we decided to take a shot," Kenneally said. "He's won five or six graded stakes prior to today, but to win a Grade I with him is phenomenal."

The wire-to-wire victory by Bradester improved his career record 9-6-2 in 23 races and the winner's share of the Stephen Foster purse raised his career earnings to \$1,056,532. The victory by the Churchill Downs-based Kenneally was his first in Grade I competition at the Louisville track, and it was the first Grade I triumph for Bravo since a victory aboard **Little Mike** in the Woodford Reserve Turf Classic (GI) in 2012.

Bradester broke sharply and quickly grabbed the lead under Bravo, who kept the eventual winner about four paths off the rail around the first turn and on the run down the backstretch. Majestic Harbor, **International Star** and favored Effinex were closest to the leader, who maintained an advantage of 1 1/2 lengths through early fractions of :23.64 for the first quarter, :47.59 for a half-mile and 1:11.69 for six furlongs. Bradester maintained that advantage into the homestretch while Majestic Harbor remained close and Eagle, last in the early going, and **El Kabeir** launched rallies from far back. Majestic Harbor started to chip away at the leader's advantage in the final eighth of a mile, while Eagle continued a strong rally from last, but Bradester had just enough left to hold the charging runner-up safe.

Jockey Gary Stevens could see no apparent excuse for the disappointing run by the favored Effinex.

"I hate to say it. I wasn't traveling like a winner at any point during the race," Stevens said. "I was just hoping things would change. A lot of times with these good horses you can't really tell what you got. We got into the turn and I was empty. ... I was done early."

-more-

El Kabeir finished fourth, 1 ¼ lengths back of Majestic Harbor, and was followed past the finish line by **Are You Kidding Me**, Effinex and International Star.

STEPHEN FOSTER HANDICAP QUOTES

JOE BRAVO, jockey of BRADESTER (winner): "He's a pretty fun horse, he does all the hard work for you. He kind of reminds me of his father Lion Heart who I rode in the Haskell. I just kind of rode him like his dad and you saw what he did today."

EDDIE KENNEALLY, trainer of BRADESTER (winner): "He's won five or six graded stakes prior to today, but to win a Grade I with him is phenomenal. Now he has established himself. He is a beautiful horse so now he's got credentials to be a stallion hopefully at some point in his career here in Kentucky and I think he's earned that right. He's been a durable and hard-knocking horse and it's great to finally win a Grade I. He was coming into the race great so we decided to take a shot. For a 6-year-old he's relatively light and has been lightly raced and he's a horse that runs well fresh so we gave him the winter off after the Breeders' Cup. He came back with a huge run at Monmouth a month ago.

"This race came up with a shorter field than in past years, so we figured it was a good opportunity for him to take a shot at some Grade I horses. Looking at the form he is the true speed of the race. We didn't know if he was going to be pressed through the first part of the race too hard and maybe just get the air knocked out of him, but I felt like if he could dictate the pace all alone on the front end that he could run them into the ground. (Jockey) Joe (Bravo) rode him with so much confidence and we are just so delighted for the whole team. We have a great crew and we couldn't have done any of this without them."

BRIAN HERNANDEZ JR., jockey of EAGLE (second): "He ran hard. I wish we'd have got there. We were just a little late. I mean, coming from that far back, he ran a big race. He did all we can ask for. We just weren't lucky enough to get the bob today."

NEIL HOWARD, trainer of EAGLE (second): "He ran great. I knew we'd be back there, but he looked comfortable. He ran good. You know these Grade Is are hard to win. ... We were pleased."

COREY LANERIE, jockey of MAJESTIC HARBOR (third): "Beautiful trip, sitting right behind him. My horse ran his race. Just wasn't good enough to be 'em today. But no excuse. We just didn't get it done. He ran a beautiful race. He tries his butt off. He's so fun to ride. He breaks sharp. He's the kind of horse every rider wants to ride because you don't really have to overcome much trouble. He puts you in a good spot and does his thing."

PAUL McGEE, trainer of MAJESTIC HARBOR (third): "He dug in and ran hard."

GARY STEVENS, jockey of EFFINEX (sixth as the favorite): "He didn't get away real clean, but I got to where I wanted to be into the first turn on the outside part, three wide and the two horses I thought would be in front of me were. But I was done early. I hate to say it. I wasn't traveling like a winner at any point during the race. I was just hoping things would change. A lot of times with these good horses you can't really tell what you got. We got into the turn and I was empty. ... I was done early."

-END-